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Mass. LSD pioneer worked with CIA

By Herbert Black
Globe Staff

One of the doctors who participated in pioneering LSD experiments at Massachusetts Mental Health Center during the early 1950s was an important source of information on the drug for the Central Intelligence Agency, according to documents made public yesterday.

The documents indicate that the doctor, Robert W. Hyde, who died a year ago in Vermont, accepted financing from the CIA while working at the Butler Health Center in Providence in 1957.

The documents also indicate that the CIA had information from Hyde concerning LSD experiments done at the Massachusetts Mental Health Center in Brookline from 1950 to 1955.

The center was called the Boston Psychopathic Hospital at the time.

Hyde was engaged there in some of the first experiments with LSD in the nation, along with Dr. Harry C. Solomon, then the hospital's superintendent, and the late Dr. Max Rinkel, a well-known Boston psychiatrist and pharmacologist.

Solomon, now 88, said yesterday that at the time he was unaware that information

from the Boston LSD experiments was being forwarded to the CIA.

"If there was any link between the Boston studies and the CIA, the OSS (Office for Strategic Services) or any other intelligence agency, I don't know anything about it. I can't deny there was a link because, naturally, they keep those things secret. They don't tell."

The OSS was the forerunner of the CIA.

During the Boston experiments, LSD was administered to about 100 persons, including members of the hospital staff and a number of Harvard students, who were paid \$10 each for their participation, according to Solomon.

He said that money for the experiments came from the state.

The LSD studies proved interesting but of no therapeutic value so far as schizophrenia was concerned, Solomon said.

One person, a young woman, was hospitalized with schizophrenia symptoms as a result of the experimentation, Solomon recalled, "but she recovered quickly and was all right."

Dr. Miles Shaw, present superintendent of the Massachusetts Mental Health Center, said last night that he was a resident when the experiments were being done. He did not

participate, he said. "I was too cautious."

Shaw said he was disturbed by the reports linking the CIA and the health center. He said psychiatry is under attack from so many quarters "that all we need now is a headline linking the mental health center to the CIA."

In the early 1950s Hyde was a resident superintendent at the mental health center. He left there to take the post in Providence in 1957 when Solomon became Massachusetts commissioner of mental health.

In September 1953, Hyde returned to Massachusetts as a special assistant to Solomon in charge of programs to aid the retarded. He was especially interested in helping retarded children.

Hyde served as medical director of the Army Induction Center in Boston before World War II and was mustered out of the service in 1945 with the rank of lieutenant colonel.

A study in 1975 by the Associated Press revealed that at the time the CIA was secretly testing LSD in the 1950s, dozens of experiments were going on and being reported in the nation's medical and mental health journals. Anyone could have walked into a medical library and read them, the article said.